

How to apply for a fellowship in ten easy steps

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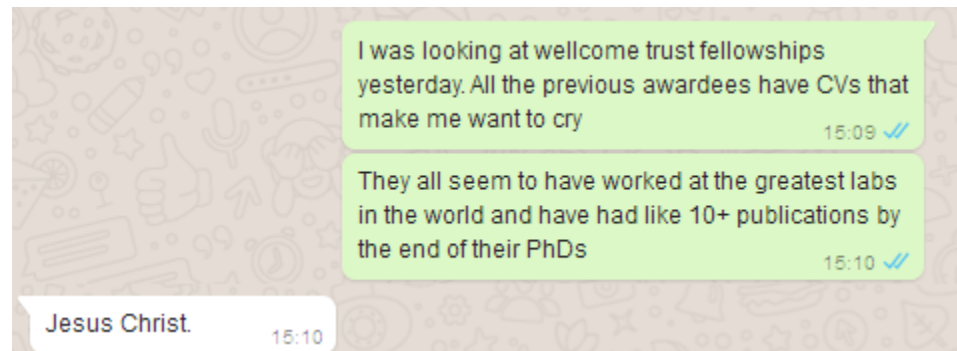
About me

- PhD in neuroimaging at KCL (2013 – 2017)
- Wellcome Trust Sir Henry Wellcome Fellowship (2017 – now)
 - 4 year postdoctoral fellowship
 - General area of biomedical science
 - Open to applicants immediately post-PhD

STEP 1

Decide whether the fellowship route is for you

- Fellowships are only one option and aren't for everybody
- They are typically competitive, and you'll need a reasonably strong CV
 - This doesn't mean you need 10 papers in Nature by the end of your PhD though!
- Don't assume you're not good enough



STEP 2

Come up with an idea for a project

- Criteria for a good project:
 - Important question
 - Achievable
 - Novel
- Should not just be a continuation of your PhD
- It's fine to move to a slightly different field

STEP 3

Identify an appropriate fellowship scheme

- This will be dependent on the field
- There are relatively few fellowships available straight out of PhD
- Make sure you go for the right stage of fellowship
 - Postdoctoral (roughly < 4-5 years post-PhD)
 - Junior PI (roughly > 4-5 years post-PhD)

STEP 4

Find people to work with

- Potentially the most important step
- Get in touch with PIs, most will be more than happy to talk about a fellowship application
- You should try to work at the best place possible, with the best people
 - It's safest to work primarily with somebody experienced (i.e. a senior PI) – the funder wants to know you're in safe hands
- Avoid staying at the same location if at all possible

STEP 5

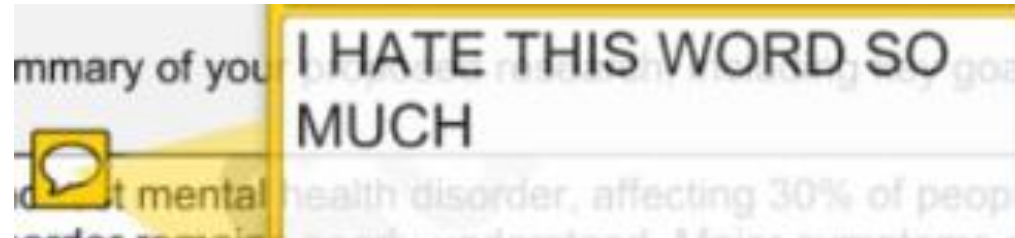
Write the full proposal

- You will generally need to write an outline of the planned work
- This is typically relatively short given what is being proposed
- It is important to strike a balance between detail and readability for a non-expert reader
- Do not leave anything to the reader's imagination – make it obvious what you're going to do and how you're going to achieve it
- Ask previous applicants to look at their applications!

STEP 6

Rewrite the full proposal

- Get as much feedback as possible on your proposal



- Your fellowship sponsors should be able to provide particularly helpful feedback
- HOWEVER – make sure that the proposal is still yours, not your sponsor's!

STEP 7

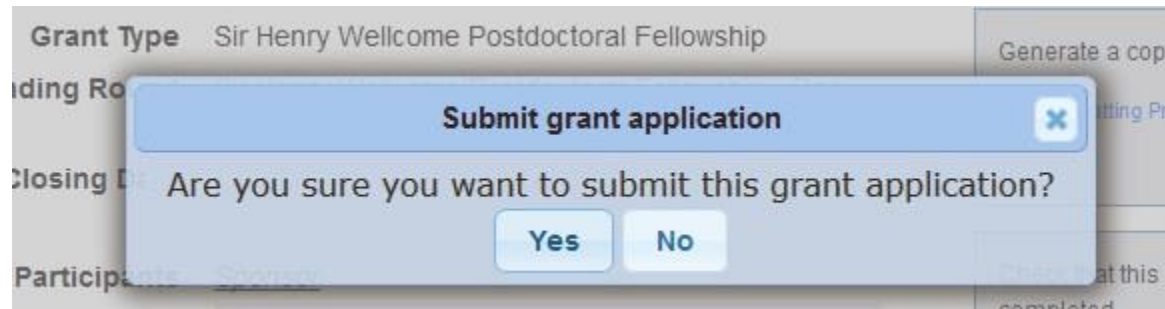
Complete the application

- You will need various details about yourself and your sponsors
- You will also need to obtain letters of recommendation from sponsors and previous supervisors
- Make sure you allow time to get hold of these!
- You will likely need to write some form of statement
 - This is where you need to sell yourself, and forget about any modesty
 - You need to provide evidence that you will be successful if awarded the fellowship – highlight previous achievements

STEP 8

Submit the application

- Eventually, it will be time to submit!



STEP 9

Submit the application again

- For some funders (including Wellcome), the preliminary application is evaluated and if successful you will be invited to submit a full application
- This is largely the same in substance as the preliminary
- However this will require additional financial details, and this will need to go through the university grants office – this can take time
- This time round the application will be reviewed by external reviewers, who are experts in the field

STEP 10

Interview!

- If successful, you may (depending on the funder), be invited to interview
- This is where you will be quizzed on your proposal and explain why you think you should be awarded the fellowship
- It is quite terrifying
- I've written another blog on the interview process at www.tobywise.com

Thank you and good luck!